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Senators Doubt Success of Bombing

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Washington—The results of American bombing of North Vietnam "have consistently fallen short" of the claims made for it, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported last night.

In commenting on the report, Sen. J. W. Fulbright, chairman, said: "The bombing has succeeded in making North Vietnam pay a high cost for its support of the war in the South. But it has neither prevented Hanoi from adequately supplying the Communist forces in the South nor reduced the North Vietnamese will to continue the war."

Focusing on the period of intense bombing from 1965 to 1968, the study by the committee staff drew heavily on Central Intelligence Agency, Pentagon and State Department, assessments of the effectiveness of the bombing, as well as a review of 7,000 documents on the subject and of classified and unclassified versions of the Pentagon papers. The study did not consider the current stepped-up air war against North Vietnam.

However there are many critics of the administration who say that even the recent bombardment of North Vietnam has not resulted in bringing the Communists to their knees. And the report yesterday that American warplanes attacked Hanoi and hit the French diplomatic mission there, injuring the top French official, Pierre Susini, has severely damaged the cause of the bombing advocates.

However, at his recent press conference, President Richard Nixon, asked what the heavy bombing had accomplished, replied that the mining of harbors and the bombing in the North was essential to turn around what was a potentially disastrous situation in South Vietnam.

In asserting that the back of

the enemy offensive had been broken, the President said that, "This could not have been accomplished without the bombing and the mining, and the bombing will continue, of course, until we get some agreements on the negotiating front."

The study also said it did not consider tactical air support, which Nixon said had been relatively successful in achieving its goals.

The experience in Vietnam, the report said, cannot be readily transferred to other situations because the leadership in Hanoi has shown "great tenacity and high motivations" in coping with the bombing.

Moreover, the report asserted, the proximity to Red China long tended to moderate United States escalation of the air war because of fear of Chinese intervention.

These conditions notwithstanding "this study calls into serious question the efficacy of strategic and interdiction bombing against a highly motivated guerrilla enemy in an underdeveloped country," the report said.

"Bombing appears capable of raising the cost of war to an enemy in such a situation but it

cannot be depended upon to weaken his will or to substantially reduce his activity by interdicting his supplies.

"Compared to the damage to United States prestige and the internal division created by the bombing policy its meager gains must be seriously questioned."